Ms. McCollum of Minnesota: Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the ***Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act***
and congratulate Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Rangel for their quick response to the surge in the nation's unemployment rate.

H.R. 5749 will provide immediate relief to families across the country by extending unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks in all states. It also allows for a further extension in benefits in states hardest hit by the weakening economy.

Passing this legislation will provide much needed help to 3.8 million Americans – including 70,000 Minnesota families.

The latest Labor Department report showed a 5 percent increase in unemployment from April 2008 to May 2008 – the biggest one-month increase in unemployment in 22 years. The economic crisis has resulted in five months of job losses and projections unfortunately indicate that the situation is likely to worsen.

An extension of unemployment benefits is critical for families struggling to deal with increased gas and food prices while searching for a new job. It is also one of the most cost-effective ways to stimulate the economy.   In fact, every $1 spent on these benefits results in $1.64 in new economic demand.

We need to pass this legislation and provide relief for America's working families today. This Congress has also enacted an economic stimulus plan in the form of tax rebate checks and passed several measures to begin to address gas prices.

In addition, the House of Representatives has passed legislation to help homeowners avoid foreclosure and a federal budget that would reinvest in Americans. In the long-term, we need a comprehensive approach to restore the strength of our economy.

We need to get serious about addressing health care costs and invest in education and training to prepare for competition in the global economy.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 5749 provides critical, immediate relief for working families and our struggling economy. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.